

April 2013

The Trapline

United States Department of
Agriculture

Animal & Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services



Cooperating with:

Nevada

Department of Agriculture

Division of Resource Protection



www.agri.nv.gov

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Mission Statement

The Nevada Wildlife Services Program (WS) is a collaborative program involving the Nevada Department of Agriculture's Division of Resource Protection (State) and the USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services Program (federal), whose mission is to protect agriculture, natural resources, property, and the human health and safety of the citizens of Nevada from the threat of injury, damage, or resource loss due to wildlife.

Introduction

During April, wildlife damage management work was conducted on an estimated **5.8** million acres of land under agreement. On these lands, WS personnel helped Nevada's farmers and ranchers protect over **\$55** million in agricultural resources such as cattle, sheep, and livestock feed; and over **\$36** million in natural resources. Additionally, WS assisted **203** persons and entities with technical assistance which involves providing information or equipment to cooperators so they can resolve problems themselves. Cooperators reported **\$11,244** in damage and WS Specialists verified another **\$13,708** in damage to other agricultural resources. These losses would be much higher without an effective wildlife damage management program. During April, coyotes accounted for **\$9,469** in verified losses, mostly to livestock, and **331** coyotes were taken with a variety of management methods to resolve these and other ongoing complaints. WS routinely collects blood samples or oral swabs from species taken or handled during normal control activities for monitoring the presence of plague, avian influenza, and other diseases. In April, **72** samples were processed.

The following excerpts are a selection of activities and events of this program which occurred during the month of April, 2013.

Resource Protection

State Office

During April, 2013, the State Office trap loaning program checked out **16** cage traps. The species distribution for the traps loaned out were: skunks (**8**), ground squirrels (**5**) and raccoons (**3**). Information regarding baits to use, trap placement tactics, handling of trapped animals and safety precautions to take when working with the wildlife species were provided for all equipment loaned.

East District



During the first week of April, Wildlife Specialist (WS) Matt Spires confirmed the loss of four adult ewe sheep to coyote predation. The losses occurred in a remote location of northern White Pine County. The value of the four ewes was placed at \$1,000. During the next several days, WS Spires set several traps and snares near the kill sites. A total of three coyotes were removed, bringing an end to the damage. WS Spires also provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future losses. The sheep owner was very pleased with all of WS Spires' hard work, not only concerning this loss but also the hard work WS Spires has provided him in the past.

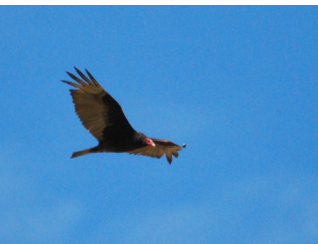


During the week of April 8th, District Supervisor (DS) Joe Bennett and Crew Member (CM) Jerred Taylor worked with a large power company in eastern Nevada, removing ravens and their nests from power lines. The ravens have been causing extensive power outages in several rural communities and in several instances have caused fires by nesting on the power lines. On April 11th, a raven nest, in Eureka County, knocked out power to several hundred residences and the same night a raven nest caused an outage and fire

near Ely. A number of ravens were removed utilizing DRC-1339. The power company identified 315 nests on power poles. Several nests with eggs were removed. Only nests that posed an imminent threat of fire or power outages were removed. Of interest, the power company reported that if the nest is removed, but not the breeding pair, then the ravens rebuild the nest within three days.



On April 9th, WS Nathan Fowler confirmed the loss of three adult sheep, valued at \$750, to coyote predation. WS Fowler was able to remove five coyotes utilizing trapping and two using calling. WS Fowler also requested the assistance of the Elko plane. On two separate flights, the plane was able to remove five coyotes on the fresh kills. No further losses have been reported. WS Fowler provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future predation issues.



On April 9th, WS Scott Little confirmed the loss of one newborn lamb to turkey vulture predation. Although rare, turkey vultures do occasionally prey on livestock. In this instance, the sheep producer witnessed the predation. WS Little provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems.

On April 14th, WS Spires confirmed the loss of two sheep, valued at \$500, to bobcat predation. Although somewhat uncommon, bobcats do prey on domestic livestock from time to time. WS Spires



set several traps near the kill site. A few days later an adult male bobcat was trapped. The bobcat was skinned and turned into the Ely Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) office. No further losses have been reported and WS Spires continues to monitor the band of sheep. WS Spires provided technical assistance to help prevent future predation issues.

On April 17th, WS Spires confirmed the loss of four adult ewe sheep to mountain lion predation. The value of the four ewes was placed at \$1,000. While inspecting the four fresh kills, WS Spires and the sheep herder found the lion's track leaving the field. A short distance away, WS Spires discovered he had trapped the offending lion in a trap he had previously set for coyotes. The rancher was very pleased that the lion was removed. The lion was a 75-80 pound female in very good condition. The lion was skinned and turned into the Ely NDOW office.

On April 22nd, WS Derril Fry confirmed the loss of two lambs to coyote predation. WS Fry utilized his well-trained coyote decoy dogs to lure one adult coyote into range and WS Fry removed it with one well-placed shot. WS Fry was also able to locate and remove one den near the kill site. The following day, the Elko plane responded to the location and was able to remove five more coyotes, bringing an end to the damage. WS Fry will continue to work the area to help prevent future problems. The area that WS Fry is working has had very high historical losses and without the hard work of WS Fry and the Elko plane, losses would be much higher.



On April 24th, WS Derril Fry confirmed the loss of two lambs near Jiggs, Nevada, to coyote predation. On April 26th, WS Fry was able to remove the two offending coyotes near the kill site, utilizing snares. No further losses have been reported and WS Fry provided technical assistance in the form of non-lethal recommendations to help prevent future problems.

During April, WS Mac Crome was busy removing coyotes from his lambing grounds. WS Crome removed 19 coyotes for the month utilizing: calling, trapping and shooting. WS Crome also requested the assistance of the Elko plane. The Elko plane responded to the location on one occasion and was able to remove an additional 10 coyotes. The sheep arrived in his area on April 15th and started lambing shortly after. Due to WS Crome's hard work, and the assistance of the Elko plane prior to the sheep arriving, no losses have been reported to date. WS Crome will continue to protect the several bands of sheep in his area.

During April, WS Virgil Fullerton confirmed the loss of two lambs to coyote predation in northern White Pine County, loss valued at \$200. In response to the depredations, WS Fullerton removed one coyote with his firearm and called in the Ely plane, which removed an additional three coyotes, stopping the depredations.

WS Billy Taylor was busy working two different projects, during the month of April. One project involved the protection of livestock in Lincoln and White Pine Counties and the other was working on a sage-grouse protection project in Lincoln and White Pine Counties. Regarding the sage-grouse protection, WS Taylor removed 279 ravens, seven coyotes and five badgers from around the leks (note picture of badger dens).



WS Taylor has done an outstanding job and is respected by all who come into contact with him.



WS Scott MacDonald was and will continue to be very busy protecting sage-grouse in Eastern Nevada, during the reporting period and into the end of the project. The intent of the NDOW project is to protect sage-grouse eggs from raven, badger and coyote predation. WS MacDonald has been monitoring raven numbers near sage-grouse lek complexes, preparing egg baits, placing them, conducting post-treatment inspections, monitoring for badger and coyote sign near the leks and removing the nest raiders. To that end, WS MacDonald removed 638 ravens, three badgers and 16 coyotes from around the leks, during the month of April.



West District

On April 1st, a livestock producer from Carson City County reported that four lambs (valued at \$500) had disappeared from his small sheep pasture. DS Jack Spencer had removed several offending lions the previous year at the location. DS Spencer walked along the river and found drag marks and as he walked near a brush pile, a large lion jumped up only 15 feet away. The startled lion made three bounds into the Carson River and once on the other side of the river, ran through a neighbor's yard. DS Spencer found the sheep kills and placed equipment around the carcasses, unfortunately, the depredating lion didn't return.

During the week of April 1st through April 5th, WS George Hansen was busy protecting newborn lambs, on six lamb bands, in Lander County. WS Hansen removed eight coyotes, during the week, by utilizing leg hold traps and trail snares. It is difficult to document lamb losses this time of year, because newborn lambs are small enough that coyotes pack them back to their dens and there are no carcasses to inspect. WS Hansen will continue to protect livestock, in Lander County.



On April 2nd, Pilot Wes Gossard and CM Brandon VanderMay conducted aerial operations around a lambing area and several calving areas, in Humboldt County. During the flight, the aerial crew removed 12 coyotes. WS John Peter provided ground support for the aircrew.

On April 3rd, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations, around a lambing area, in Lyon County. The livestock producer reported three lambs (valued at \$375) were killed by coyotes. During the flight, the aerial crew removed one coyote and located three coyote dens. WS Nick Smith provided ground support for the aircrew.

On April 4th, WS Doug Koepke checked trail snares placed around several lamb bands, in Washoe County. During his equipment inspection, WS Koepke removed four coyotes by using trail snares. Newborn lambs' constant bleating can attract hungry coyotes from miles around and during this period of life, lambs are extremely vulnerable to predation. WS Koepke will continue to protect livestock.

On April 10th, a sheep herder in Washoe County reported that about 20 newborn lambs (valued at \$2,000) had been killed by coyotes on the lambing range. The herder reported that as soon as the lambs were born, coyotes starting moving in and packing them off. On April 10th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation and promptly removed 10 coyotes that were in the lamb bands. The aerial crew also found about 25 dead ewes, but they were later inspected and determined to have died from disease. WS Koepke provided ground support for the aircrew.

On April 10th, WS Smith inspected equipment on several calving areas, in Douglas County. During the inspection, WS Smith removed four coyotes with the use of M-44s. WS Smith reported that livestock losses have been minimal because of his protection efforts. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 12th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several sheep bands, in Washoe County. During the flight, seven coyotes were removed and one den was located. WS Koepke provided ground support for the aircrew.

During the week of April 17th through April 23rd, WS Koepke was busy inspecting field equipment around several ranches, in Lyon and Washoe Counties, resulting in the removal of 21 coyotes and the end of the depredations. The livestock producers were pleased with WS Koepke's livestock protection efforts.



On April 17th, DS Spencer provided a Wildlife Damage Management presentation for the University of Nevada at Reno (UNR). DS Spencer utilized a Power Point presentation and fresh frozen depredated lambs that had been killed by various predators as a "hands on" teaching aid. Students were full of questions and the presentation was well received.

On April 17th, WS Koepke checked equipment around several calving areas, in Humboldt County. Upon inspection, WS Koepke removed 11 coyotes taken by trail snares around the calving grounds. The ongoing calf damage ceased and the livestock producers were very pleased with WS Koepke's protection efforts.



On April 18th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations on a lambing range, in Humboldt County. During the flight, 12 coyotes were removed, with most of the coyotes within a mile of the lambing grounds. Coyotes from miles around move into the lambing areas. WS Peter located several of the coyotes for the aircrew. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On Saturday April 20th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted aerial operations around a sheep producer, in Humboldt County. WS Peter arrived near the lambing areas well before daylight and located several coyotes. Once the light was good enough to work, the aerial crew removed seven coyotes. WS Peter has been riding around the sheep with his mules almost every day, so he is very knowledgeable of the day to day events that occur around the sheep, which aids in maximizing protection efforts.

During the week of April 22nd, WS Hansen was busy running equipment around several lambing bands, in Lander County. WS Hansen also ground crewed for Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay, which resulted in the removal of seven coyotes. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

During the month of April, WS Ben Miller was busy protecting mule deer, antelope and bighorn sheep on the Washoe County Mule Deer Project (hunt unit 014). According to NDOW wildlife population data, WS Miller protects 1,500 mule deer, 110 bighorn sheep and 400 antelope (valued at over \$3,000,000.00). Last week, WS Miller saw over 150 mule deer in one day and a group of 18 mule deer bucks while checking equipment. WS Miller has leghold traps and trail snares placed around mule deer herds, targeting lions and coyotes. WS Miller will continue protection efforts.



On April 19th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around six lamb bands, in Lyon County. During the flight, two coyotes were removed and three dens were located. Livestock losses have been sporadic on these lamb bands. WS Smith provided ground support for the aircrew.

On April 23rd, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several sheep bands, in Washoe County, resulting in the removal of eight coyotes. As the lamb bands are spread over many miles of country, preventing predation is challenging. WS Koepke provided ground support for the aircrew. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 25th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around six sheep bands, in Lyon County, resulting in the removal of four coyotes and the locating of six dens, which were reported to WS Smith. Protection efforts are ongoing.

On April 26th, Pilot Gossard and CM VanderMay conducted an early morning aerial operation around several lamb bands, in Humboldt County. During the flight, eight coyotes were removed. It appears that every day, new coyotes show up in the lambing areas. Protection efforts will be ongoing.

On April 30th, WS Smith inspected two lambs (valued at \$250) that had been killed by ravens, in Lyon County. WS Smith employed the use of DRC-1339 treated egg baits for the removal of the 18 depredating ravens, which ended the damage. WS Smith will continue to protect these lamb bands.



During the month of April, Wildlife Biologist (WB) Zack Bowers entered the final phases of completing the Wildlife Hazard Assessment (WHA) for a Naval Air Station (NAS) in Northern NV. The WHA involved conducting structured surveys on the airfield and the surrounding area, as well as general observations. This data was collected for a 12 month period in order to determine seasonal and spatial trends of wildlife usage on the airfield and surrounding area. WB Bowers analyzed the data and wrote the WHA which includes recommendations regarding species management, habitat alterations, and agricultural management practices. WB Bowers will also continue surveys on and around the airfield in order to monitor for changes in wildlife presence and activity.

During the month of April, WB Bowers continued working with the propane cannons on the airfield in order to deter great blue herons and coyotes from using/crossing the area. It has yet to be determined if the propane cannons will be effective in keeping great blue herons from crossing the airfield. In addition to the propane cannons, WB Bowers harassed one horned lark, one coyote, four American avocets, and ten mallards from the airfield using vehicle and voice.



As a result of the concern of a possible BASH incident involving a great blue heron, WB Bowers attended a conference call with the environmental department where possible methods/actions were discussed.

Throughout the month of April, Qualified Airport Wildlife Biologist (WB) Luke Barto continued to protect aviation safety at a local airport, removing: one feral/free ranging cat, two Canada geese, one California gull, eight yellow bellied marmots, one muskrat, one striped skunk, three European starlings, 10 pigeons and 95 California ground squirrels. All feral/free ranging animals captured on/around the airport are transferred to Washoe County Animal Services for the safety of the animal as well as the flying public. WB Barto also removed a red tail hawk nest and a Canada goose nest from the above mentioned airport.

WB Barto also utilized non-lethal harassment techniques to disperse: 40 ducks, 50 Canada geese and one red tail hawk.

Approximately 470 California gulls were harassed throughout the month of April, from a privately owned vacant lot, less than a mile from the aforementioned airport. For the past three years 300-500 California gulls have nested at this location, utilizing a direct flight path over the airport to access feeding locations, becoming a wildlife strike hazard to air traffic. In response, WB Barto utilized an integrated approach to harass the gulls; using closely monitored canine harassment as well as an improvised, inexpensive drag to scatter nesting material (see New and Developing Methods section). The combined approach discourages gulls from nesting at the location and forces them to nest at a location that doesn't put their daily movement patterns over the airfield. Thus far, the approach is working; WB Barto continues to evaluate the effects and protect aviation safety.

On April 29th, WB Barto removed a northern flicker from a neighboring government building. The flicker had pecked several holes in the stucco building, causing several hundred dollars in repairs. No further damage has been reported.

New and Developing Methods

In response to the above mentioned gull hazard issue, WB Barto researched harassment techniques that would allow him to force the gulls to nest at a location that was safer for aviation safety and the gulls. Approaches that were reviewed either lacked in efficacy, were cost prohibitive, or simply would likely harass the urbanites instead of the gulls. WB Barto brainstormed with other qualified airport biologists and opted to put together a simple drag that would have a similar effect as a rodeo drag. The drag utilized was a simple unused hog panel,



with two tires affixed to the top of the panel for weight, drug behind WB Barto's truck. The approach, which has been effective, negates the need to utilize other time/cost intensive measures which wouldn't remove the overall gull hazard (such as egg oiling). Congratulations WB Barto!

WS Peter has employed an electronic calling system as a successful predator deterrent. The call box is usually used to lure in predatory wildlife; however, lately WS Peter has been placing it around the lambing areas with scare sounds (helicopter flying, race cars and gunfire) played at night, in 15 minute intervals. Congratulations WS Peter!

Valuing and Investing in Employees

During the month of April, DS Spencer conducted two field inspections with WS Barto. Field inspections were conducted at a large airport in Washoe County and at a fenced off abandoned strip mall parking lot, where California gulls were attempting to nest, thereby creating conflict with air traffic.

Information and Communication

During the reporting period, WB Bowers participated in an "Earth Day Event" at the above mentioned Naval Air Station. WB Bowers set up a booth and answered questions about Wildlife Services mission/operations, as well as general wildlife questions. The event was attended by the Armed Services men/women and their families, including many young children.

During the month of April, three dogs and one cat (valued at \$2,500) were killed in the Sparks area, by coyotes. Several depredating coyotes had been removed in previous months, however, new coyotes have moved in and the cycle is beginning anew. Since August, residents of Washoe County have lost 36 pet dogs to coyote attacks, with an additional one injured (as reported to our office). Technical non-lethal assistance has been provided to residents, and in some extreme cases, direct control has also been applied to resolve the problems.

On April 25th, State Director (SD) Mark Jensen and DS Spencer attended the N-3 Grazing Board Meeting in Fernley.

Emerging Trends/Issues

Nothing to Report

Equal Employment Opportunity/Civil Rights (EEO/CR)

Nothing to Report

Future Meetings and Events

Wildlife Damage Management Committee Meeting. May 9th in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.

NDOW Commission Meeting. May 10th and 11th, in Reno. SD Jensen to attend.



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